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WORK AND THE WORKMAN:

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An Address to the Trades' Union Congress

IN DUBLIN, SEPTEMBER, 1880.

BY

JOHN K. INGRAM, LL.D.

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There are some verbal changes which might perhaps be advantageously made in passages of this Address. But I have thought it right to print it exactly as it was delivered.

J. K. INGRAM.

2 Wellington Road, Dublin,
17th September, 1880.

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WORK AND THE WORKMAN.

I BELIEVE I am indebted for the privilege of addressing you to-day to the impression produced on the minds of some of your leaders by a discourse which I delivered at a recent meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. What I proposed to myself in that discourse was to show that certain prevailing ideas as to the constitution and method of Economic science required revision and amendment. Whilst recognizing the valuable work done by economists, and notably by Adam Smith, I endeavoured to show that many of them, by taking abstractions for realities, by drawing unverified deductions from *a priori* assumptions, and by giving to their conclusions, even when in a certain sense just, too absolute a character, missed the truth, and set up figments of their own imagination for laws of social life.

But the most important proposition I sought to establish was this—that the Economic phenomena of society cannot in our researches be isolated, except provisionally, from the rest,—its material aspect from its intellectual, moral, and political aspects,—without our being thus led into grave error. Or, to state the same thing in other words, I asserted that in the study of society, regarded as a subject of theoretic contemplation, the attempt to constitute the investigation of its Economic laws into a separate science is a philosophically vicious procedure, and that such inquiries must be regarded as forming *one* branch, to be kept in constant and close relation with the others, of the general Science of Sociology.

The views of method which I thus put forward met with a remarkable degree of attention, and even of acceptance, both in these countries and abroad. This arose, as I have always felt and said, not from any originality in the conceptions, for they were not new, nor from any special merit in my exposition of them, but from the fact that they fell in with a spontaneous movement of mind which had been everywhere taking place. I was only the spokesman of convictions which had been gradually forming, and were now pretty well matured.

Some of those who possess your confidence were attracted by these views. They believed, as I have reason to think, that the method of investigation which I advocated mainly on philosophical grounds, would tend to the formation of juster and more humane conceptions of social practice. And thus it has happened that I have now an opportunity of laying before you some considerations respecting the conduct of life and the actual dealings of men, to

which the larger and less one-sided mode of study I recommended appears to lead us. I have naturally chosen as the special department of human affairs, to which I should address myself on an occasion like the present, the position, the requirements, and the future of the working-classes. To fix our ideas—though most of what I shall say would admit of wider application—I shall keep before me, as a definite type of the workman's life, the form which it assumes in the great centres of manufacturing industry.

Every particular social problem is only a case of this general one, how to subordinate all social forces to the highest permanent well-being of the entire community. Now, the more we study this great question, the more we shall find that no material expedients—however useful in their proper place—will suffice for its solution. That solution must be essentially moral. The end in view can be attained only by means of a generally accepted code of social duties, continuously applied and brought to bear on practice by the systematic solicitude of society. The essential basis of this action is the establishment of stable intellectual convictions respecting the conditions of healthy social life—in other words, a scientific Sociology. Duties, in fact, are social functions freely performed, and they cannot be fixed with the degree of definiteness necessary for practical discipline, without a study of the functions as they arise out of the natural constitution and historical development of the social body. The ideas appropriate to each function must thus be elaborated, in order to determine the corresponding duties. This is the high practical destination which lies before Sociology, and which gives it an importance and interest transcending that of every other department of human knowledge.

What then are the general conceptions we ought to form of the industrial functions? What are the relations which have here to be regulated, and what the moral ideas which ought to preside over that regulation?

The whole modern organization of labour in its advanced forms rests on a fundamental fact which has spontaneously and increasingly developed itself, namely, the definite separation between the functions of the capitalist and the workman, or, in other words, between the direction of industrial operations and their execution in detail. Appearing at the close of the Middle Ages, when industry began to take the place of military activity, this separation has become more and more pronounced with the growing expansion of productive enterprise. The active rich have thus tended to assume the position of practical chiefs of modern society; the determination and conduct of all industrial operations, the government of the world of labour, has more and more passed into their hands. This ascendancy of wealth is deplored by some, and, if it necessarily meant what is properly known as plutocracy—the absolute domination of wealth, the prospects of society would be gloomy enough. But the use of wealth, as of every other social force, must be regulated and moralized, a task which ought to be easier than that of controlling the rude preponderance of military force, which was its historical predecessor.

The active rich, if they would develop in themselves the sentiments

which befit their position, must rise above the purely private point of view, and regard themselves as discharging a true public function—that, namely, of administrators of human capital. They cannot claim to be creators of this capital; the largest part of it is the fruit of the labours, economies, discoveries, inventions, and institutions of many generations. The office it fulfils is that of rendering possible the continuation, under equitable conditions, of the common work of society; and the active rich are by their position morally charged with its preservation and management for this end, and its transmission with increase to our posterity. The institution of individual property guarantees to them the security of possession and independence of action which are necessary for the efficient discharge of this function. Without such personal appropriation, there could be neither vigorous initiative, nor persistent activity, nor vigilant economy. There can be no army without officers as well as soldiers, and this principle is just as true of industrial as of military organization. No important operation could be effectively conducted, if every one who took part in the execution of it had a voice in its conception and general direction. Great improvements could with difficulty be introduced, if their adoption had to be submitted to a vote, which would often be ignorant, timid, or prejudiced. But whilst the security and independence of the capitalist class are thus guaranteed, its members are subject to the moral responsibilities which attend on every social function, and which are not in their case the less real because society for good reasons renounces, except in extreme cases, their enforcement by material means. This conception of the capitalist as a social administrator heightens his dignity, entitling him to respect by virtue of what is really a public office—a respect which can on that ground be shown by his inferiors without hypocrisy or servility, even when his private character is entitled to little esteem. At the same time, the ideal thus presented must on good natures have an elevating effect; must tend to raise them above the vulgar abuses of wealth, and to make them regard as the greatest advantage it confers the power of more largely and effectually benefiting their fellow-men.

Our views of the office of the workman must also be transformed and elevated. The way in which his position is habitually contemplated by the economists, and indeed by the public, is a very narrow, and therefore a false one. Labour is spoken of as if it were an independent entity, separable from the personality of the workman. It is treated as a commodity like corn or cotton—the human agent, his human needs, human nature, and human feelings, being kept almost completely out of view. Now there are, no doubt, if we carry our abstractions far enough, certain resemblances between the contract of employer and employed, and the sale of a commodity. But by fixing exclusive, or even predominant attention on these, we miss the deepest and truly characteristic features of the relation of master and workman—a relation with which moral conditions are inseparably associated. As in science it is the method we pursue on which the value of our investigations will in the long run depend, so in matters of conduct the point of view at which we

place ourselves tends to determine the character of our whole procedure. And by viewing labour as a commodity, we at once get rid of the moral basis on which the relation of employer and employed should stand, and make the so-called law of the market the sole regulator of that relation.

Such a perverted conception arises from the individualistic way of looking at the relation in question, as if it were purely a matter of private concernment. But the entire case receives a different complexion when we place ourselves at the social point of view, from which alone these subjects can be rightly studied. Labour, in the widest sense of the word, is then seen to be the continuous and combined effort of our race for the improvement of its condition and its nature; the present using the acquired knowledge and transmitted resources of the past, and handing down an augmented inheritance to the future. All forms of labour, from the loftiest intellectual achievement down to the humblest share in material production, come to be viewed as elements in this great human movement. The lowest genuine exertion of strength or skill—the endeavour to do any piece of work honestly and thoroughly, is thus ennobled and consecrated. Master and workman fulfil different, but equally necessary parts in a joint social enterprise; the one supplying the instruments and provisions needed for its prosecution, and having the general direction of the operations; the other contributing the hand, eye, brain requisite for their execution in detail. This is the only really human conception of labour—the only one which puts employer and employed each in his right place. It presents the workman, not as a semi-slave selling himself or part of himself for purely private ends, but as a free man co-operating according to his ability in the service of humanity, under the guidance of an associate in the same service, who differs from him only as captain from private soldier.

The highest ideal of the moral obligation incumbent on all of us, is that of living for others. Now it requires no sentimental exaggeration, but a simple appreciation of facts as they are, to show the working-man that this is what, by his industrial vocation, he is called to do. For all that goes to the material sustenance of his contemporaries, for all of material treasure or accommodation that is by them transmitted to their successors, his co-operation is indispensable. He is privileged to see, more clearly than workers of a higher order, the direct effects of his exertions in the promotion of the common good. For the elevation of his sentiments, it is only necessary for him to keep before him these realities of his social function, and to do consciously and with loyal willingness what he is in fact, by the necessities of his position, doing every day.

The first effect of a thorough appropriation of this conception of the workman as a social functionary will be to supply a foundation for his just dignity. It will place on a solid basis his claim to a respect and courtesy on the part of his superiors in rank, which are far from being yet sufficiently wrought into our modern manners. It will also profoundly modify our way of viewing his remuneration. His faithful service is now too often regarded as obtaining in his wages a full equivalent return, dispensing us of

all further obligation towards him. But, as Carlyle has said, "Cash never yet paid one man fully his deserts to another; nor could it, nor can it, now or henceforth to the end of the world." This coarse view is not in fact applied in the case of the higher social offices; there the idea of a functionary who serves the public well having got his complete requital by receiving his salary would be recognized as a vulgar one. The salary is in such cases regarded only as furnishing the means of continuing the function under such conditions as the due preparation for it, and the fitting discharge of it, require in the interest of the community. Now from the social point of view, the separation hitherto set up in our conceptions between public and private functions, as well as between the higher and the humbler offices, must be given up. Public and private offices are equally departments of the service of Humanity, which differ only in the manner of their retribution. The wages of the working-man are to be regarded as the indispensable means of keeping him in such a state of physical health, material security, and moral quietude, that he may be able to continue his service to society, and to prepare a new generation for the same service. The only true recompense of the right performance of his functions, lies in the conscious fulfilment of social duty, and in the approbation and esteem which this justly earns from such of his fellow-men as have the opportunity and the capacity for appreciating his work.

The twofold conception I have presented of the capitalist and the workman brings out distinctly their duties to each other. Those duties are such as spring from their relation as mutually indispensable associates in the execution of a great social function. This implies, along with the cultivation of habits of mutual respect, a spirit of mutual help and furtherance, and a loyal interest in each other's prosperity. These obligations are binding on both sides. On the part of the workman, they call for faithful work as opposed to eye-service, and for abstinence from all unreasonable demands. In the master, as the higher and more powerful of the associates, they involve a larger responsibility and duties of a wider range. As the appropriate motto of the feudal ages was *Noblesse oblige*, so that of modern industrial society must be *Richesse oblige*. The masters must subdue in themselves the base inclinations which prompt too many, while accumulating personal gain and lavishing it on their own pleasures and ostentations, to neglect their co-workers who ought to share in equitable measure the benefits arising from their joint operations. Wealth can never be what a man should "seek first"; no spurious economic doctrines can shut out the moral obligation which accompanies us into all our enterprises, that, namely, of finding our happiness in loving and helping our fellow-men, rather than in selfish pursuit of our own advantage. The masters ought to be, as some of them have nobly shown themselves, the friends of their workmen, interested in their welfare and that of their families, and actively studying that welfare—giving them opportunities of intellectual improvement; striving to make all the conditions of their labour as favourable as possible to their health, comfort, and morality; keeping them together and assisting them to maintain their homes, when

they are innocently suffering from any public calamity. The master who succeeds, as it is called, without caring for his men and helping them to succeed along with him, has attained no true success ; in spite of the wealth he has accumulated, tried by every real standard, his life has been a failure.

In what I have been saying, I have assumed the continued existence of the separation between the functions of the capitalist and the workman, which has increasingly prevailed in the constitution of modern industry. The socialistic schemes which would forcibly abolish this separation by taking all the wealth of the community into the management of the State have found little welcome amongst English working-men, who have been hitherto distinguished by their freedom from the subversive utopian notions which have attracted popular favour in other countries. Deeply feeling the evils of industrial life, as it now is, they yet have not aimed at the overthrow of its present organization. Whilst resisting special movements and tendencies on the part of the employers, they have not attacked them as a class or institution. The so-called co-operative system, if extended to the fullest conceivable development, would indeed have the effect of supplanting the masters, without compromising the principle of property. But I think this system has not, as yet, won much cordial approbation from our working-men, or largely coloured their ideas of the social future. It has been much more warmly taken up by philanthropic writers on their behalf. The co-operative stores, or societies of supply, indeed, appear to have been a genuine effort of the people to escape from the abuses of the retail traffic, and obtain good articles at reasonable prices for their daily consumption. These have, I believe, been really successful, and have done much to correct the evils of adulteration, and the enhancement of prices arising from credit dealings. When these results have been thoroughly attained, such societies will most probably disappear. In any case, they are not true co-operative societies—they are merely joint-stock companies. But the co-operative societies of production have far more widely-reaching objects, at least in the conceptions of the social speculators who have most strongly advocated them. To these they present themselves as the true solution of the labour problem. Professor Cairnes believed that in this new organization of industry lay the one hope of the working-classes, and Mr. Thornton preached it as a panacea for the evils of the world of labour. I ought to speak with caution and modesty in opposition to such men ; but I am compelled to say that in my opinion the proposed solution is an impracticable one, and that the material and moral results of any attempt to realize it on the large scale would disappoint the expectations that have been entertained respecting it. Such attempts are, of course, and ought to be, perfectly open to the working-classes, and it is possible that many trials of the system may be made before the disillusion comes. But I believe it is sure to come. The whole of the commercial and trading classes, as Mr. Howell has said, would not quietly submit to be “shouldered out of the way” by the new industrial system, and the sustained vigour of management and concentration of skill and energy which arise from the ownership

of one or a very few, would be more than a match for the looser and less compact organization of these societies. Their operations will at least be always exposed to risk of failure, and I cannot think that the all-important object of the stability of working-men's homes can be furthered by subjecting their scanty means to the vicissitudes of commercial success, which large capitals may bear without fatal strain, but to which small resources should not be exposed. The breakdown of a co-operative factory, as has been well observed, is in its results fraught with far greater evils, both of material disaster and of moral discouragement, than can attend the collapse of a private firm. Our recent policy has been to give the security of the State for the deposits of the savings of the working-classes—a policy founded on the just idea that for them not gain, but the prevention of loss is the first object. The natural destination of such savings is not industrial investment, but the formation of a modest reserve to meet special domestic exigencies, or to make possible the performance of special domestic duties. The suggestion has sometimes been made that the capital of the trades-unions should be embarked in co-operative enterprise, but such a step must surely be deprecated by all friends of those bodies, whose efficiency essentially depends on their funds being at once available for any emergency.

Much stress has been laid by the advocates of the co-operative system on the enlightenment and the moral benefits which must arise from its practice. It is said that it will bring the working-men to understand the grave difficulties with which employers have to contend in the conduct of their business, and will make them more reasonable in their dealings with their employers, by showing them in a practical way the bearing on production and prices of the regulations they desire to enforce on the masters. It will be observed that this implies only a partial or temporary trial of the system, and looks to the organization of employer and employed as the really permanent and normal one. The instruction so received might be useful enough, but it would be dearly purchased by extensive and repeated failures, and I believe the same lessons can be sufficiently inculcated through study and observation without seriously compromising the interests of families. It is also alleged that the working of the co-operative system, regarded in its reaction on character, will call forth many of the highest qualities of our nature. All combined action of men for honest ends doubtless develops some useful elements of character; but the degree of elevation of these elements depends on the nature and objects of the combination, which may be of a kind to starve other nobler traits. I believe in no moral regeneration founded on appeals to private interest; social motives alone can truly moralize; and I cannot help thinking that upon the whole the tendency of the co-operative system would be to spoil the best qualities of the working-man. His characteristic type would tend to be transformed into that of the small capitalist. For the absence of habitual money-making cares, and the disengagement of mind when his daily work is over—which are amongst the best compensations of a workman's laborious life—would be substituted the fretting anxieties of the trader. The

large sympathies and generous impulses which are natural to the one would be supplanted by the comparative deadness to social interests, and the constant gain-regarding attitude of the other. The enjoyment of domestic life and the cultivation of the intellect would tend to be subordinated to the pursuit of profit. The workman would be likely to prolong unduly the hours of labour on the plea that he was working for himself. Instead of the frank and warm-hearted friend of the fellow-workers with whom he was daily associated, he would be tempted to become their spy and the controller of their actions, not on the basis of general morality, but on that of his private interest. I have spoken strongly, because I wish to emphasize my dissent from propositions on this matter which are sometimes quietly taken for granted. I do not of course say that the system would in every case produce the moral consequences here indicated, but I am convinced that its general tendency would be to affect injuriously the peace of the working-man, his freedom of mind, his openness to elevated ideas, and his real independence.

I believe that the immense majority of working-men must remain to the end working-men, and that only. I further believe that this necessity admits of being fully reconciled with their happiness and their dignity. They would, in my opinion, best consult their real interests by recognizing these truths as soon as may be, and sincerely renouncing the pursuit of a different position. What they ought to aim at is the elevation of their class as such, without seeking to alter the basis of the existing organization of industry. In this work they will find not only an abundant but a fruitful field for all their public spirit, energy, and sagacity.

The interest of the Trades' Union movement seems to me to lie precisely in this, that it follows the practical and hopeful line I have just indicated. Assuming the permanent existence of the relation of master and workman, it for the first time practically asserted the necessity of systematically regulating that relation, and set on foot an effort, however inadequate and often mistaken, towards realizing such a regulation. Attacked and denounced as scarcely any other institutions ever have been, the unions have thriven and grown in the face of opposition. This healthy vitality has been due to the fact that they were a genuine product of social needs—indispensable as a protest and a struggle against the abuses of industrial government, and inevitable as a consequence of the consciousness of strength inspired by the concentration of numbers under the new conditions of industry. They have gradually purged themselves of many abuses which appeared in their earlier proceedings—abuses which were in some degree explained, if not palliated, by the gross injustice with which they were treated by the law. From that injustice they have completely liberated themselves by steady, moderate, and well-considered action. They have been, as is now admitted by almost all candid minds, instruments of progress. Not to speak of the material advantages they have gained for working-men, they have developed powerful sympathies among them, and taught them the lesson of self-sacrifice in the interest of their brethren, and, still more, of their successors. They have infused a new spirit of

independence and self-respect. They have brought some of the best men to the front, and given them the ascendancy due to their personal qualities and desirable in the interests of society. According to the testimony of all who have the best means of knowing, the most influential members of these bodies, instead of multiplying and encouraging strikes, have diminished their frequency and mitigated their violence, and have fostered the habit of recurring to milder methods for the adjustment of disputes.

It would be an impertinence on my part to advise working-men to maintain the unions. They can appreciate their value far better than I could do, and nothing is clearer than their fixed resolve, not only to maintain those institutions, but to develop and extend them. What I would urge is the importance of introducing more and more of moral elements into their action. They have already recognized that violence and menace are forbidden to them as a means of effecting their objects, and this has immensely strengthened them in public estimation. They should proceed further in the same path. If there be anything remaining in their rules which cannot be defended on principles of the highest social morality, they ought to expunge it. They should put forward no claims that are not rigorously just. They should seek to give effect to these claims by conciliatory methods, regarding strikes as a last resource, sometimes indeed necessary, but always deplorable as intensifying evil passions and compromising many innocent existences. They should discuss all the questions that concern them—such as those of wages, hours of labour, piecework, apprenticeship—on higher grounds than those of material class interests. They should invite the attention of the thinking public to these questions, and look to the best disinterested opinion as the judge and controller of their operations. The action of the trades' unions cannot solve the problem of the regulation of industrial life; essentially based on antagonism and the assertion of rights, they cannot work a reconciliation which depends on the acknowledgment and application of rules of duty. The real and radical solution of this problem, as of the general social problem which includes it, can be effected only by such a reorganization of ideas and renovation of sentiments, as will rise to the dimensions of an intellectual and moral reform. But the unions may be powerful agencies in keeping alive a sense of the need of that true solution, in impelling society towards it, and in preparing the public mind for it. For these ends, even apart from their immediate services, their action will long be indispensable, and will be more and more valuable, as it relies increasingly on moral means.

For the direction of the efforts of the working classes towards the amelioration of their position, it is necessary that they should decide on the answer to the question—What are their real requirements? What are the objects which, though not at once fully attainable, they ought to keep before them, and towards which they ought steadily to march? These requirements—omitting minor points, and looking only at the broader elements of their condition—appear to me to be three in number; and I proceed to consider them in succession.

The first is—*Adequate wages.*

Adam Smith, placing himself at the point of view from which the working-man is regarded as a social functionary, says—"It is but equity that they who feed, clothe, and lodge the whole body of the people, should have such a share of the produce of their labour as to be themselves tolerably well fed, clothed, and lodged." "Tolerably well"—that is his expression—which is dictated by a sane appreciation of realities—of the limits imposed by the unalterable conditions of human life. But this expression plainly has relation not to a fixed, but to a movable standard of living. The "tolerably well" of one period or one state of society might be the "scandalously ill" of another. If I were asked to give precision to Smith's sentence by introducing this element, I should say that in a normal state of things, wages at a given time and place should not fall below what is necessary to enable a working-man and his family (supposed of average number) to live in a manner, the most economical indeed, but still consistent with whatever the contemporary local civilization recognizes as indispensable for physical and mental health, or required by the rational self-respect of human beings. I fear we are in many instances far enough removed from this measure; but I do not see how we can evade the necessity of reaching it, if the highest ends of society are to be attained.

The idea of the relation of wages to a social standard of living has an important bearing on a view now often put forward. It is said that the unions have forced up wages so as to make it impossible to compete with foreigners, a statement strangely at variance with what is at the same time alleged by others, that wages would stand at the present rates if the unions had never existed. We are told that the working-classes ought to submit to reduction of wages, in order that our capitalists may undersell and paralyse their foreign rivals, and that so wages temporarily depressed may afterwards rise to a higher level than the present one. Curiously enough, the same appeal is made in the continental countries, where workmen are similarly counselled to deny themselves with a view to defeat British capitalists; and there would be more foundation for the demand there than here, wages having risen in late years much more rapidly abroad than at home, if it were true that rising wages necessarily imply more costly production. To judge by the language used by capitalists and their spokesmen, it might seem that the great question of industrial life at the present time was this—what working population among civilized nations would be content to live the most miserably in order to drive the others out of the markets of the world? I hope our working-people will follow no such *ignis fatuus*. The political economists, in discussing the question of population, justly insist on the value to the working-classes of maintaining the standard of living they have reached. The English workman has, as a result of the whole past, attained a standard superior to that which prevails in general in continental countries; and it is most important that the ground gained in this direction should not be endangered. What is really to be desired is that the foreign workman's standard of living may also rise, and that he may maintain every increase of wages which he has once secured. This will doubly promote your interests,

for he will then be a better customer for English products generally, and he will be less likely to be transferred from his own country to England for the purpose of keeping down your wages.

Not only must our workmen refuse to fall in with the narrow and short-sighted policy of which I have been speaking; they must take care not to let their sentiments be perverted by the cry of foreign competition. The tendency of this headlong chase after English industrial supremacy, as it is called, is to renew something of the old jealous hostility to "the foreigner" which used to be fostered in the interests of military ascendancy. But, however the capitalist may feel, the sentiment of the workman at home towards the workman abroad should be one of sincere fraternity. They have the same hopes and aspirations, and the problems in which they are interested must receive identical solutions. Let us not blind ourselves to plain truths. Our patriotic partialities must not, any more than our domestic preferences, make us unjust to others, or false to the general weal. The industrial populations of the west are all co-workers for the universal good. It is desirable in the interest of humanity that they should all increase in skill, in energy, and in perseverance, and that they should adopt the most improved methods of production. If any foreign country has peculiar facilities for any form of production, it is desirable that those facilities should be brought into effective operation. It is the happy prerogative of industry, in which it contrasts with military activity, that it admits of the simultaneous prosperity of all. Economists have expounded an important idea which tends to reconcile the antagonistic interests of nations as rival producers. They have pointed out that to the division of occupations which in each separate nation facilitates production and increases wealth, corresponds the natural distribution of different kinds of production between different communities, according as local circumstances or national aptitudes prescribe. If each nation withdrew from branches of industry for which its native bent or its circumstances disqualify it, choosing those for which it has a special advantage, the common harmony would be greatly promoted, while the general wealth would be augmented. It is one of the great evils of the protective system that it stands in the way of these adjustments which would reconcile conflicting claims and turn competition into co-operation.

English workmen cannot be the best in every department of skilled industry; there are some kinds of it for which they have not a natural genius. But they will always hold the foremost place in some departments. It seems established by competent testimony that they are now the most energetic and persevering workers in the world; and that the quality of their work is still, on the whole, the most enduring and trustworthy. That it can retain its entire superiority in these characters over foreign work, is not to be expected. But it is alike the interest and the duty of our capitalists, by offering really good wares—not sham and shoddy ones, made only to sell,—and of our workmen, by honest careful labour, to keep as high as they can the reputation of British industry, and make as valuable a contribution as possible to the wealth of mankind.

The second requirement of the workman is *A Well-regulated Home*.

I have hitherto generally spoken of the working-man as an individual; but no study of his position is complete which overlooks the fact that he is ordinarily the head of a family. The principal solace of a life of labour—nay the principal source of human happiness generally, lies in the exercise of the domestic affections. It is the duty of the chiefs of the industrial world to do all that in them lies towards securing to the working-man the enjoyment of so great a blessing. This involves in it the regulation of his labour in such a way that he may have the opportunity of sufficient intercourse with the members of his family, and may return to them fatigued, perhaps, but not exhausted in body or broken in spirit by too prolonged or excessive exertion. A life of work and nothing but work is no life for a man, who must not be degraded into a mere instrument of production. An Irish poet has claimed for the working-classes—

“Leisure to live, leisure to love, leisure to taste their freedom,”

and the demand is a just one. Work of some kind, honestly and faithfully done, is incumbent on all men, from the highest to the lowest; it is unworthy of us to shirk our fair share in the common service of Humanity. Work with the hands is the necessary, and, in my judgment, under right conditions not the unhappy destiny of the great majority of our race. But the best, the most effective work is not the most prolonged. “It will be found, I believe,” says Adam Smith, “in every sort of trade, that the man who works so moderately as to be able to work constantly, not only preserves his health the longest, but, in the course of the year, executes the greatest quantity of work.” It is surely no insoluble question for physiology, what is the average time during which the powers of attention and effort can be kept in full exercise with the best results for the health and permanent efficiency of the human agent. It is doubtful whether even this limit should be reached in a civilized community. And this for several reasons, of which one only is now insisted on, namely, that the workman needs both in his own highest interests, and in those of society, an habitual expansion of his domestic affections. For family life is not merely the source of the purest happiness; it is also the best school of the heart. The hardness and selfishness which the pressure of practical life too often produces, is best tempered by the atmosphere of the domestic hearth, where we learn, in the most elementary and attractive form, the lesson of living for others. It has always been recognized that in the practice of the domestic virtues is laid the surest foundation of civic and social worth. This is a consideration which has perhaps not sufficiently attracted the attention of the Malthusians, usually blind to all but the material side of the subject they discuss.

Now woman, first as wife, secondly as mother, is the centre of a home. It is in her action, whether unconscious or voluntary, on the nature of the man—if she be a worthy representative of her sex—that the chief moral efficacy of the domestic union lies. She presents a model and exemplar of the qualities in which he is most likely to be deficient—gentleness, tenderness, unselfishness. As

mother, she exercises a real moral providence over her children. She has in her hands the first development of the natures of the young, and the formation of their habits, and how ineffaceable these earliest impressions are, is the lesson of all experience. Happy results of this kind are often attained in a large degree by the mere ministry of love, when the woman is far from approaching the ideal of her sex, and when she wants the intellectual cultivation which would so much aid and elevate her endeavours.

In order to enable her really to discharge these sacred offices, the neglect of which is a fatal waste of all that is most precious, the woman must be freed from the necessity of non-domestic labour which is now too often imposed upon her. This is a step in the upward movement of the working-classes which cannot be suddenly effected, but it is an essential one, and they must set their faces towards it. Those classes are now justly demanding that they should be in the fullest sense incorporated into modern society, that the gains which advancing civilization has brought to the superior ranks, such as intellectual cultivation, and political and civic recognition, should be extended in the utmost practicable degree to them. This social benefit too, the consecration of woman to her domestic office, which is enjoyed by the ranks above them, must become theirs also; for the moral motives which dictate it apply as strongly in their case. Some of the coarser forms of labour which were positively degrading to women have been rightly interdicted by law; the change of which I speak will have to be carried out by the spontaneous action of the working-classes themselves, as the increasing amount and better employment of their wages will make it possible.

It will easily be understood that the object is not that women should be maintained in idleness. Those of us who are happy enough to have the opportunity of making such observations, know that a good woman works as constantly as the most industrious husband, though in a different sphere. On the practical side, she is the economist, utilising to the utmost the resources of the home, and studying incessantly the health and comfort of its inmates. But the office for which she is most indispensable is the moral one, the cultivation of the affections and the regulation of the habits of a new generation; and this requires the restoration of woman to the domestic hearth. Beginning with mothers, as the most urgent case, that restoration must be extended afterwards to the younger women, who should be trained, not for material production (except so far as that is possible within a family), but for the regulation of homes, and the physical care and moral formation of human beings. I know how vast this programme is, and I do not overlook the difficulties which beset some portions of it, from the necessity of material guarantees for women who are not either wives or inmates of a father's home. But those difficulties are not insurmountable, and I am convinced that there is no social reform which would tend more powerfully than the one I have been advocating to the happiness of women and the elevation of the working-man.

Other considerations connected with the right constitution of the workman's domestic life can here be no more than glanced at. The

modern solicitude for the sanitary improvement of dwellings will modify his habits for good, by making home more attractive, whilst it will tend to the production of a healthier and more energetic industrial population. The acquisition, too, of the dwelling as his property will have the most important reaction on the sentiments and habits of the family ; and those persons deserve the gratitude of the community who are labouring to make this acquisition easier by modifications of the law.

The third requirement of the working classes is *Education*.

Their elementary instruction has, until quite of late, occupied most of the public attention, and absorbed the largest share of individual effort ; and justly so, for it is the necessary foundation of all else. But contemporary opinion seems to be altogether in favour of the gradual provision of a higher and wider instruction for working people ; of opening to them a larger access to scientific and æsthetic culture. This opinion, however, in many minds rests on a very narrow basis. The demand for the scientific instruction of the workman has generally been urged on the ground of its technical value as likely to make his labour more intelligent and more effective. Now, on this consideration, which is true as far as it goes, might rest the necessity of giving him some notions of the truths of those physical sciences by which the processes of industry are dictated or explained. But the higher ends of science in the formation of the man and the member of society are thus left altogether out of account. Again, æsthetic culture for the workman is encouraged on the ground that it will give greater elegance and finish to the products of his skill, which also is a just conception in itself. But this view, exclusively followed out, would lead to a very undue limitation of art as an element of education, and would shut out poetry and music, because their value lies not in their technical utility, but in their general mental and moral influences.

The principles which should guide us in determining the right general education of working-men are identical with those which should be applied to the solution of the same question for other classes. There may be special difficulties in applying the solution in the case of the workman ; but that consideration cannot affect the rational basis of the solution. Now, the general aim of education, so far as it is scientific, is to give a man a right general conception of the world in which he lives, of the permanent conditions, whether absolutely fixed or modifiable, to which his whole existence is subjected, and with which all his efforts, in order to be successful, must be kept in harmony. These conditions are of three kinds, as embodied in the laws of inorganic, vital, and social phenomena. No education is complete which does not embrace the essential ideas relating to these several classes of facts. Even by the upper and middle ranks, this large culture has not been attained. Our courses of instruction are so overlaid with exaggerated specialities and superfluous refinements, that the materials for an intelligent appreciation of our life on all its sides are seldom, if ever, furnished by our modes of training, and the defects of official systems have to be supplied, if at all, by further individual self-cultivation. But I

am convinced that, even for the working-classes, by due condensation of the intellectual treasures at our disposal, a comprehensive education of this kind might be provided, if they on their part were willing to make the necessary effort to obtain it. In other classes parents postpone for their children the entrance on professional work, in order to secure for them a more liberal general culture. The working-classes should consider how something similar might be effected for them. Of the practical way to this great acquisition, I ought to speak with reserve; but it will probably be found to lie in a reorganized system of apprenticeship. I believe there is a very general impression that that old institution has been somewhat inconsiderately dealt with in the modern development of collective industry, and that it required rather to be adapted and improved than to be undermined and largely broken down as it has been. It is while a youth is learning his handicraft that a portion of his time might be taken from work for his scientific instruction; and if the latter were made as important an object as the former, the ancient term of seven years, from fourteen to twenty-one, might still be found not too much for the combined technical and educational preparations. The æsthetic capabilities also might be concurrently trained, not alone, as I have said, to improve art workmanship, but also for the higher purpose of humanizing and sweetening life—of giving it grace, refinement, and charm.

It is evident that of all the sciences the most important are those which have to do with the determination of duties. But, as I showed at the outset, social duties cannot be rationally established without a study of the constitution and development of society. Hence the necessity of a scientific social doctrine, which ought to form a universal element of our system of education. Its importance is twofold; first, as a foundation of individual discipline, and secondly, as a basis of public opinion. As to its operation on individual conduct, by establishing the laws which regulate social phenomena, it sobers and tranquillizes the mind, showing that the fundamental constitution of practical life is beyond our control, and that no popular sovereignty, ever so unanimous, can alter the essential nature of things. At the same time, proving that social phenomena are, by virtue of this very subjection to natural laws, largely modifiable in their secondary dispositions by wise human intervention, it teaches, along with the lesson of submission, that of hopeful effort. It brings out the consequences of every line of conduct as affecting the welfare of others and of the whole community, with such clearness as to defy sophistry or evasion. It enables each to see and feel his personal share in the daily civic co-operation, in the great work of maintaining and developing the material and moral life of the race, and to understand the normal relations of his own office with the other social functions; and thus, while heightening his sense of dignity, it deepens his consciousness of responsibility. Such a basis of discipline ought not to be restricted to any class, but extended to all. The object of giving such instruction to working-men is not to make them savants or philosophers, but to assist in training them as enlightened, courageous, and conscientious citizens, acknowledging

and practising their duties to their families, their country, and their kind.

But further, such a social doctrine is necessary as a basis for public opinion. The direct action of truth on the individual intellect and conscience will not suffice for the regulation of conduct. The strong reaction of all upon each must be brought to bear, both to control selfishness and to stimulate sympathy. Fixed principles respecting the social relations and social duties once freely adopted by competent minds, and then systematically diffused by education, would form an opinion strong enough to support the good inclinations and to resist the vicious tendencies of individuals. Public opinion is evidently destined to exercise in the future an action in the regulation of social life of which we have yet had but little conception. The healthy and effective exercise of this power will depend on its due guidance and concentration, a subject of which much may be said into which I cannot enter now. One thing is plain, that the working-classes will more and more become the great laboratory of public opinion. This would be inevitable from the fact that they compose the mass of society, and suffer most from the imperfections of the social system, even if they were not, as they now are, invested with political power. Hence the importance to other classes as well as to themselves of their being directed in their judgments by a true social doctrine—which, discountenancing all violence and oppression, will at the same time furnish just standards founded on rational ideas, by which the mode of discharge of every social function, whether public or private, can be tried and estimated.

I have not, you will observe, presented the view that the intellectual improvement of the workman will assist him in rising out of his class into a higher sphere of life. I do not, either for him or for his employer, contemplate what is called “getting on in the world” as the great end of existence. In much of the popular literature of self-help, the hero held up to our admiration is the man who, beginning as workman, scales the ladder of social elevation, and closes his career as a master; and it is almost implied that the great question is not how to improve and ennoble the workman’s life, but how to enable the ambitious and energetic to escape from it. I think current ideas on this matter require a good deal of correction. The causes which determine the rise of some to the rank of directors of industry, whilst others remain in the position of workmen, are not always easy to trace; most frequently, accidental elements of situation or opportunity are involved. But so far as personal qualities are operative, it would be a great mistake to suppose, as is too often taken for granted, that a rise of this kind is always or ordinarily connected with superiority of nature. A man who remains a workman all his life, may be, and often is, in all the essential qualities of manhood, of far greater intrinsic value than another who raises himself to wealth and rank. The practical qualities which most lead to what is called success—toughness, dexterity, and caution, valuable no doubt in themselves, may be combined with a poor intellect and a narrow heart. The very processes by which industrial ascendancy is reached, even when the means used are strictly legitimate, involve grave dangers

to men's natures. The constant habit of self-regard, the temptation to put aside the claims of others, the intense pre-occupation with possibilities of profit, have a tendency to produce on the intellectual side limitation of views, and on the moral side hardness and want of sympathy. These qualities have often been observed in self-made men, and particularly in the smaller capitalists who are still suffering from the deteriorating effects of the struggle. It is only just, however, to add, that in natures fundamentally good, when the strain of acquisition is relaxed, the possession of wealth and of the power it bestows often develops the better elements and brings out the noble instincts of the genuine chief. More frequently, perhaps, social fruit is not derived from these elevations before the second generation, and then only where it does not happen that vanity and a weak imitation of the old aristocracy lead to a life of luxury and ostentation, and a contemptuous neglect of industrial duties.

But, be this as it may, there is no reason why we should think less of a man because ambition and the desire to be rich are weak in his nature. They are weak, I believe, in most healthy natures, and it is well that it should be so; morality and religion have always deprecated any intense degree of them. We cannot indeed dispense with a strong dose of them in some members of the industrial world; for they are necessary to bring about the formation of large capitals and to provide efficient directors of industry. But the development of these elements of character is required only for the actual or destined capitalist; they are foreign to the vocation of the ordinary working-man, and if indulged, produce, from the necessary limitation of his circumstances, a miserable restlessness and spirit of revolt. What is really important for working-men, is not that a few should rise out of their class—this sometimes rather injures the class, by depriving it of its more energetic members. The truly vital interest is that the whole class should rise in material comfort and security, and still more in intellectual and moral attainments.

I have now concluded the remarks which I thought would usefully occupy the time we were to spend together. Little conversant with details, I have dealt mainly with general principles, and I have perhaps somewhat tasked your attention by the lines of thought I have followed. But what I have given you was the best I had to offer; and I trust it may be of some use in helping you to avoid false paths, and in fixing your attention on the true means of achieving the end of all your efforts—a better and nobler life for the workman of the future.

